



Building Workplace Vitality to Mitigate the Impact of the Great Resignation



Although three years have passed since the COVID-19 pandemic began, hospitals and health systems continue to struggle with staffing shortages. More than 330,000 physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants and other clinicians have quit their jobs.¹ If these trends continue—and it looks like they will—experts predict that the industry will be short more than four million workers by 2026.² Work overload is the top reason healthcare workers say they are burned out and a primary reason for quitting among those planning to leave their positions.³ To gain a healthy work-life balance, many workers see quitting as the only option.

Burnout and the Intent to Leave⁴

- 47.3% - Physicians that report being burned out
- 56.0% - Nurses that report being burned out
- 54.1% - Other clinical staff that report being burned out
- 24.3% - Physicians that plan to leave their positions
- 41% - Nurses that plan to leave their positions
- 32.6% - Other clinicians that plan to leave their positions

Adding insult to injury is the fact that increasing numbers of hospitals are conducting layoffs in an effort to address shrinking margins.⁵

Between January and June of 2023, hospitals laid off nearly as many workers as in all of 2022.⁶

This growing trend further exacerbates burnout and work-life balance by adding even greater stress to the remaining staff who are expected to pick up the load. Besides the impact on physicians, patient safety and the patient experience are also affected.



¹ <https://www.bizjournals.com/bizwomen/news/latest-news/2023/02/health-care-workers-continue-to-leave-workforce.html?page=all>

² <https://www.oracle.com/human-capital-management/healthcare-workforce-shortage/>

³ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11606-023-08153-z>

⁴ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11606-023-08153-z>

⁵ <https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/providers/layoffs-ramping-among-hospitals-and-health-systems-heres-34-examples-2023>

⁶ <https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/providers/layoffs-ramping-among-hospitals-and-health-systems-heres-34-examples-2023>

PATIENT SAFETY

A shrinking workforce can mean longer hours and fewer days off for staff. In jobs where safety is not an issue, that may be fine. However, when consumer or patient safety is on the line, and critical decisions must be made at a moment's notice, it is an entirely different scenario. Healthcare is a prime example.

Unlike other industries that limit workers' hours due to safety concerns, like long-distance drivers, pilots, and air traffic controllers (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Federal Aviation Administration), physicians, nurses, and other clinicians are expected to work extended hours as needed. The impact of long hours is well known. Multiple studies have shown that long hours and burnout lead to higher error rates and increased patient safety events.⁷ While most healthcare organizations have comprehensive programs in place to address workplace safety, factors such as staff workload and burnout are often overlooked.

Longer hours, distraction, and fatigue can lead to serious medical errors: Errors in judgment, medication errors, misdiagnosis, surgical errors, and more. "Diminished vigilance, cognitive function, and increased safety lapses place clinicians and patients at higher risk for errors." And according to research, burnout can also cause clinicians to "clinically detach from their work," leading to "negative attitudes toward patients" and poor communication among the care team.

Another study—published before the pandemic—found that burnout among physicians “doubled the odds of an adverse patient safety event.”¹⁴

Regulated Work Hours by Industry



Interstate truckers⁸
11-hour driving limit with a 60-hour/7-day or 70-hour/8-day on-duty limit



Pilots⁹
10-hour flight time limits with 10-hour rests (14 hrs for multi-time zone flights)



Air traffic controllers¹⁰
10-hour work limit with 9 hours between shifts



Physician residents¹¹
30 hour work limit with 10 hours between shifts



Physicians¹²
No federally regulated limit



Nurses¹³
No federally regulated limit

⁷ <https://med.stanford.edu/news/all-news/2018/07/medical-errors-may-stem-more-from-physician-burnout.html>

⁸ https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/sites/fmcsa.dot.gov/files/docs/Drivers%20Guide%20to%20HOS%202015_508.pdf

⁹ <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-14/chapter-I/subchapter-F/part-91/subpart-K/subject-group-ECFRc17623c0e0be17e/section-91.1059>

¹⁰ <https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=air+traffic+control+hour+limites&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>

¹¹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medical_resident_work_hours#:~:text=The%20Accreditation%20Council%20for%20Graduate%20Medical%20Education%20\(ACGME\)%20has%20limited,10%20hours%20off%20between%20shifts.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medical_resident_work_hours#:~:text=The%20Accreditation%20Council%20for%20Graduate%20Medical%20Education%20(ACGME)%20has%20limited,10%20hours%20off%20between%20shifts.)

¹² [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medical_resident_work_hours#:~:text=The%20Accreditation%20Council%20for%20Graduate%20Medical%20Education%20\(ACGME\)%20has%20limited,10%20hours%20off%20between%20shifts.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medical_resident_work_hours#:~:text=The%20Accreditation%20Council%20for%20Graduate%20Medical%20Education%20(ACGME)%20has%20limited,10%20hours%20off%20between%20shifts.)

¹³ <https://psnet.ahrq.gov/perspective/burnout-among-health-professionals-and-its-effect-patient-safety#:~:text=Clinicians%20with%20burnout%20may%20also,at%20higher%20risk%20for%20errors.>

¹⁴ <https://psnet.ahrq.gov/perspective/burnout-among-health-professionals-and-its-effect-patient-safety#:~:text=Clinicians%20with%20burnout%20may%20also,at%20higher%20risk%20for%20errors.>



DETERIORATING PATIENT EXPERIENCE

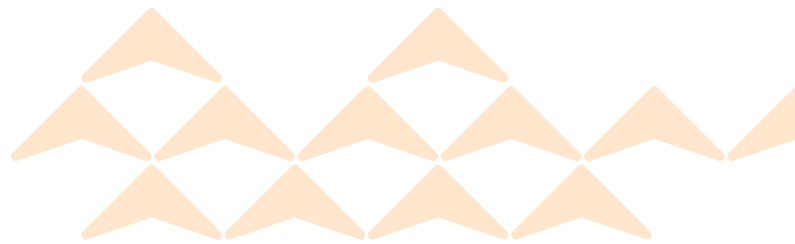
Prior to the pandemic, 73% of patients surveyed said they were “very satisfied” with the level and quality of communication with their providers. During the pandemic, that number dropped to just 60% while the number of patients saying they were “not satisfied at all” actually tripled.¹⁶ Research shows that there has been a shift in the perception of care quality in our country as evidenced through lower “likelihood to recommend” scores across the board.¹⁷ The number of patients saying they would “definitely recommend” a hospital to others fell by 4.5%, while the number of patients rating their hospital experience a ten out of ten, where ten is the best and zero is the worst, fell by four percent.

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A NEW APPROACH TO WORKPLACE BALANCE AND VITALITY

Many healthcare organizations have begun offering mental health resources as a way to help physicians and other clinicians address challenges like depression and anxiety. While this can be powerfully helpful, those resources do not address the underlying issues that lead to stress and burnout. Since hospitals are already struggling to keep staff, they need a new approach to addressing workplace stress.



Many forward-thinking organizations are choosing to address these issues by leveraging Advanced Practice Providers (APPs) such as physician assistants (PAs) and nurse practitioners (NPs). In most hospitals, physicians are only onsite and available during morning rounds. Once gone, it can be challenging to get in touch with them. APPs, on the other hand, are on the floor or in the ward throughout the day. This helps alleviate stress of overworked clinicians by giving them an always-available resource, making their jobs easier. And better work-life balance can reduce burnout and lower turnover. It can also improve provider-patient engagement and enhance the patient experience—all of which benefit the hospital’s HCAHPS scores. Organizations can achieve significant progress toward improving care continuity by partnering with multispecialty hospitalist experts.



¹⁶ <https://www.reliasmedia.com/articles/147877-hcaps-other-satisfaction-scores-may-suffer-from-covid-19-effects>

¹⁷ <https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/patient-experience/covid-19-influenced-decrease-in-patients-likelihood-to-recommend-services-survey-finds.html>



SUCCESS STORY

University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center (UM CRMC) is a 98-bed medical center with 373 medical staff delivering compassionate, award-winning care to Charles County and the surrounding communities for more than eighty years. UM CRMC is a partner hospital of Adfinitas Health, a physician-led provider of innovative, customizable clinical staffing services and value-based, collaborative care to acute and post-acute facilities. Today, all of UM CRMC's physicians and APPs are employed by Adfinitas.



Dana Levy, MSN, RN is Chief Nursing Officer at UM CRMC and credits Adfinitas providers with the high level of job satisfaction among her nursing staff at the medical center. "Adfinitas providers are the kind of people you can always call and freely have any conversation," she says. "They are engaging and easy to talk to." In the age of COVID, when so many front-line staff are leaving the industry, having a positive working relationship between nurses and physicians is extremely important.

Dr. Ivelisse Michel has been the lead Adfinitas hospitalist at UM CRMC for the ten years Levy has been there. "Dr. Michel leads by example and tries to model behavior that she expects from the providers," Levy says. "For example, she will work nights and weekends to understand best the experience her providers face during the off shifts, and will not ask her staff to do things she is not willing to do herself." Levy says this is important because the hospital's nighttime staffing and resources can differ greatly from daytime.

Levy says one of the things she appreciates most about Adfinitas is that they match each provider's strengths to the roles and areas in which they're placed. She says they have a great team mentality. "It's never 'us versus them.'" Levy says she appreciates that Adfinitas providers are so willing to collaborate with her nurses. "They are much more engaged and always take the time to talk with the nurse."

Levy says that when Adfinitas assigns providers to a specific area, the providers get to know the nurses in that area, which helps increase rapport. That, in turn, reflects positively on the patient experience. Levy also appreciates that Adfinitas providers conduct multidisciplinary rounds every day, where they welcome and listen to nurses' suggestions, including bedside nurses, case management nurses, and palliative care nurses. This team-centered care approach is essential for the success of the patient's care plan.

In addition to great physicians, Levy says Adfinitas has "phenomenal nurse practitioners" as well. She says both the NPs and the physicians are great advocates for patient care and very patient centered. "They are very forward-thinking and always prioritize the needs of the patient." When nurses are confident that their duty of patient advocacy will be recognized, they experience a greater sense of job satisfaction.

Patient experience is the top focus at UM CRMC, and Adfinitas also embraces this focus. Levy likes that Adfinitas is willing to "put some skin in the game." She says, "They have invested in data collection and do their own patient surveys." These surveys allow patients to name providers and nurses and offer input on facility satisfaction issues, giving Adfinitas real-time feedback on how patients feel about their providers. Adfinitas then uses this feedback as part of its efforts to continually improve the patient experience.

"Adfinitas providers are among the top performers in patient satisfaction and they have no difficulty recruiting and retaining the very best quality providers and nurse practitioners."

-Dana Levy, MSN, RN, is Chief Nursing Officer at University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center



BUILDING WORKPLACE VITALITY

Staffing shortages are not going away anytime soon. And while hospital margins are beginning to rebound, progress remains slow. Partnering with care experts like Adfinitas can help. Adfinitas is committed to improving workplace vitality by providing its hospitalists with optimal work-life balance. For example, Adfinitas providers work just 14 shifts in a 28-day block, which means they have equal time on and off. And during their time off, Adfinitas providers are not expected to be on call. This enables them to completely disengage from work so they can completely relax and recharge before returning.

Improved workplace vitality can lead to happier, healthier providers, better outcomes, and enhanced patient satisfaction.



ABOUT ADFINITAS

Adfinitas Health is a physician-led, trusted provider of compassionate clinical care across the entire continuum from acute to post-acute. We deliver innovative, customizable services and value-based, collaborative care to our partners with an unwavering commitment to client satisfaction. Adfinitas transforms patient care with fully engaged clinicians who become integral members of site-based teams, leading the clinical, administrative, and operational components of patient care. Founded in 2007 by board-certified physicians, Adfinitas Health partners with more than 65 hospitals and post-acute facilities across the US. We effectively recruit and employ highly skilled physicians and advanced practice providers who provide expertise, leadership, and advisory support to improve clinical care, quality, and operations. Adfinitas Health also provides industry leading training programs for advanced practice providers supporting strong retention and clinical performance.



Learn more about Adfinitas Health by visiting
www.AdfinitasHealth.com